Hybrid Blues Scales

BY DON LATARSKI

TO PERSONALIZE YOUR BLUES lines, lace them with notes found outside the standard blues scale. Here are two cool ways to do this:

When. The fourth measure of a 12-bar blues is a perfect spot for adding tension. Here you can play tensions against the I7 and then resolve to a IV7 chord tone in bar 5.

What. Two tension-rich hybrid scales you can use to colorize bar 4 are the blues diminished and blues whole-tone. (A hybrid scale combines two scales to make a new one.) Both the blues diminished and blues whole-tone begin with the first four notes of a standard blues scale: 1, ♭3, 4, and ♭5. In the key of *A*, that's *A*, *C*♮, *D*, and *E*♭.

The upper degrees of the blues diminished scale are ♯5, 6, and 7. In *A*, that's *E*♯, *F*♯, and *G*♯. The upper degrees of the blues whole-tone scale are ♯5 and ♭7, or *E*♯ and *G*♮ in the key of *A*.

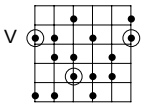
Where. Try the two-octave *A* blues diminished pattern in **Ex. 1a**, then compare that to the *A* blues whole-tone pattern in **Ex. 1b**. Once you've got the patterns at your fingertips and the sound of each scale in your ears, it's time to extract lines.

How. The trick is to target a IV7 chord tone *before* you hit bar 5. This way, you have a destination to work toward—light at the end of the tunnel. In our progression, the IV7 is *D7*, so your target choices are *D*, *F*♯, *A*, and *C*♮.

Important: When working through the blues diminished scale, don't hang out on the 7, as it's not a

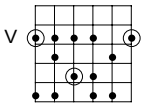
Ex. 1a

A Blues/diminished

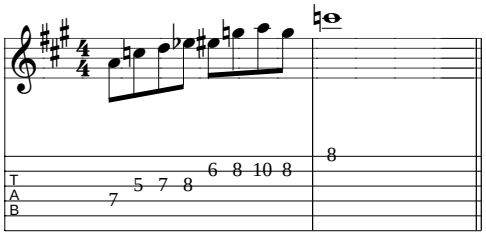


Ex. 1b

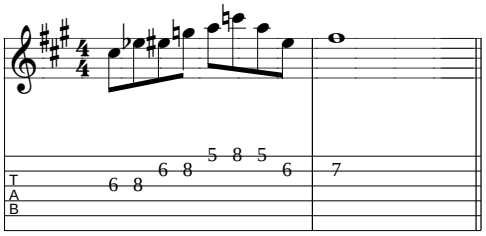
A Blues/whole-tone



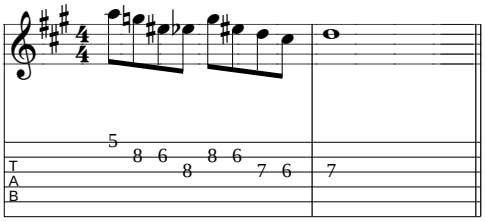
Ex. 2



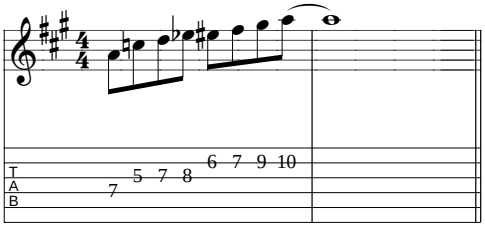
Ex. 3

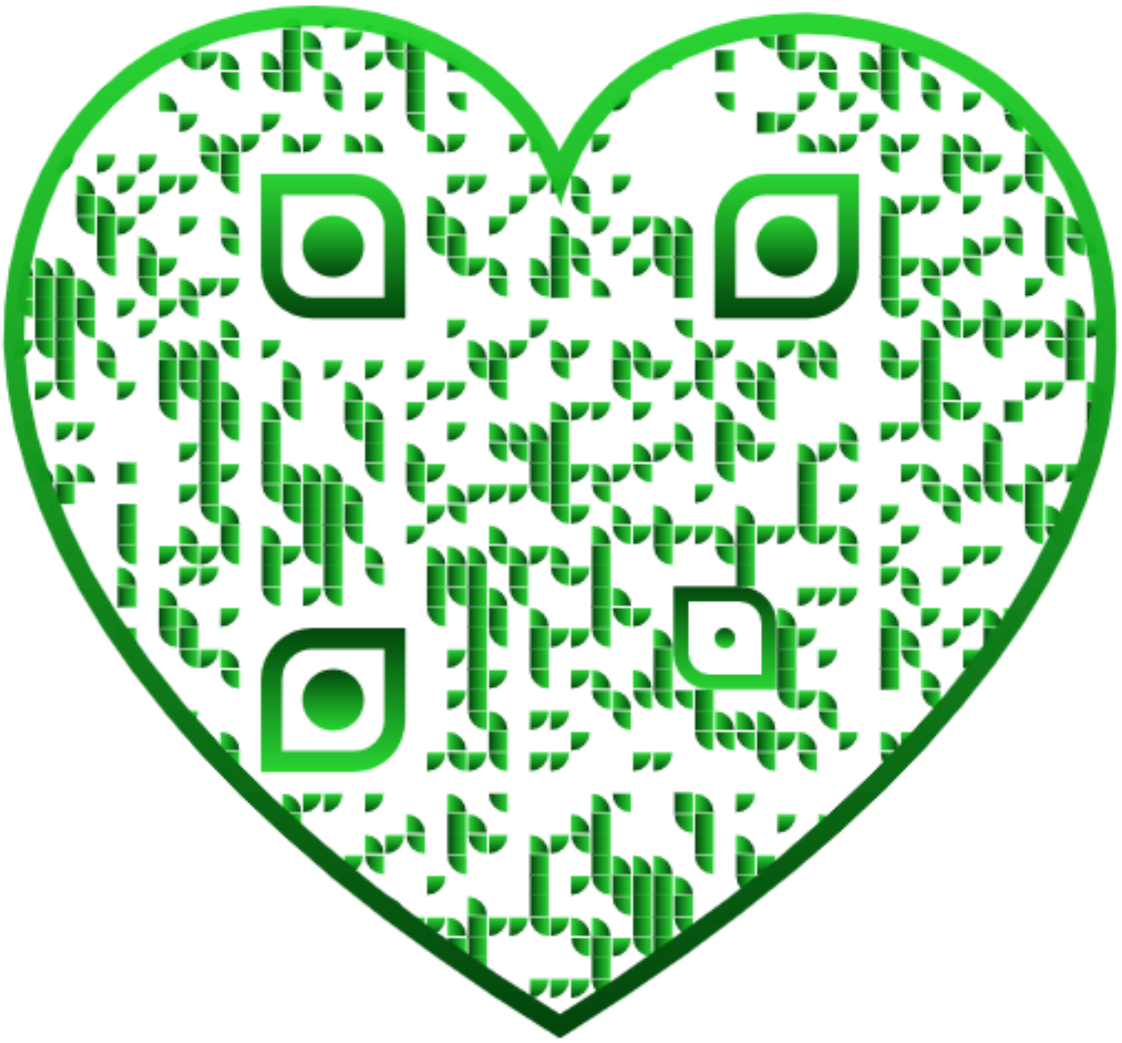


Ex. 4



Ex. 5



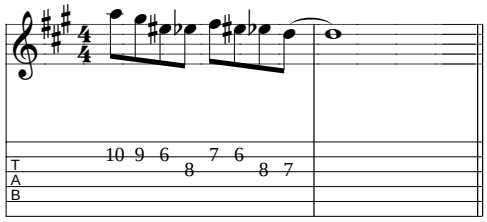


I7 chord tone. Instead, use the 7 as an approach note to the I7 chord root. For instance, *A7* is spelled *A*, *C♯*, *E*, *G♮*—1, 3, 5, ♭7. While *G♯* (7) will clash with *G♮* (♭7), it makes a strong half-step approach to *A*, the root.

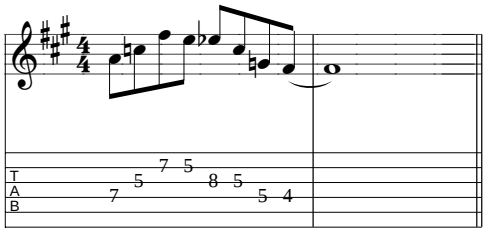
Loosen your fingers and ears with the next six examples. Simply plug these licks into bars 4 and 5 of an *A* 12-bar blues progression. **Examples 2**, **3**, and **4** are blues whole-tone lines, and **Examples 5**, **6**, and **7** are blues diminished lines. For maximum vibe, play with a swing feel.

Don Latarski's *The Ultimate Guitar Chord Big Book* is available from Warner Bros. For information on *Rue Two*—his latest CD with Rue de Blues—visit www.crescentrecords.com.

Ex. 6



Ex. 7



The Chromatic Mirror

BY KEVIN J. LUTKE

THE CHROMATIC MIRROR MAKES A challenging picking and warm-up exercise. The idea is to play every possible interval within an octave. Here's how it works:

• First, select a note on the fourth string. This will be your home pitch—the note you'll always return to as you play each interval.

• Starting from the home pitch, ascend with a minor second (the smallest interval in our 12-tone system), return home, and then descend with a minor second.

• Returning to the home pitch, repeat the process, ascending and descending with a major second.

• Continue this procedure, working your way chromatically through each interval until you're mirroring octaves.

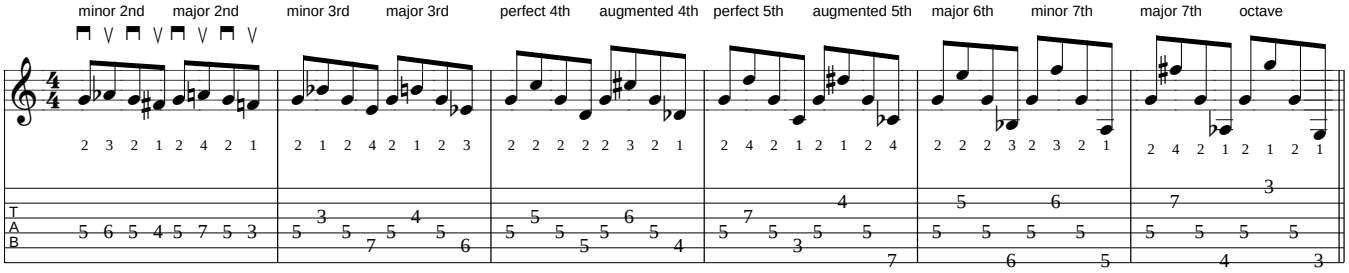
Ex. 1 illustrates the game, using a fourth-string *G* as the home pitch. Follow the alternate picking pattern set up in bar 1. **Ex. 2** reverses the process by starting with a descending minor second. Again use strict alternate picking.

Finally, move the home pitch up and down the fourth string. You can venture as low as the 2nd-fret *E* and as high as you can comfortably play.

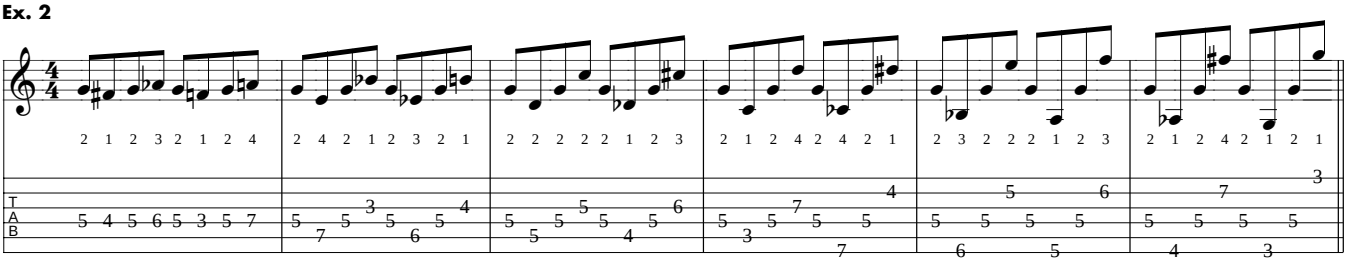
The benefits. The chromatic mirror gives both hands a total workout: You use all fretting fingers, and the string skips improve picking accuracy. Best of all, you'll improve your visual and aural interval recognition.

New Yorker Kevin Lutke has two CDs—*Fallenwood* and *Road to Santa Ynez*—on Amper-sand. Check your local record store or call 1-800-378-9313 for details.

Ex. 1



Ex. 2

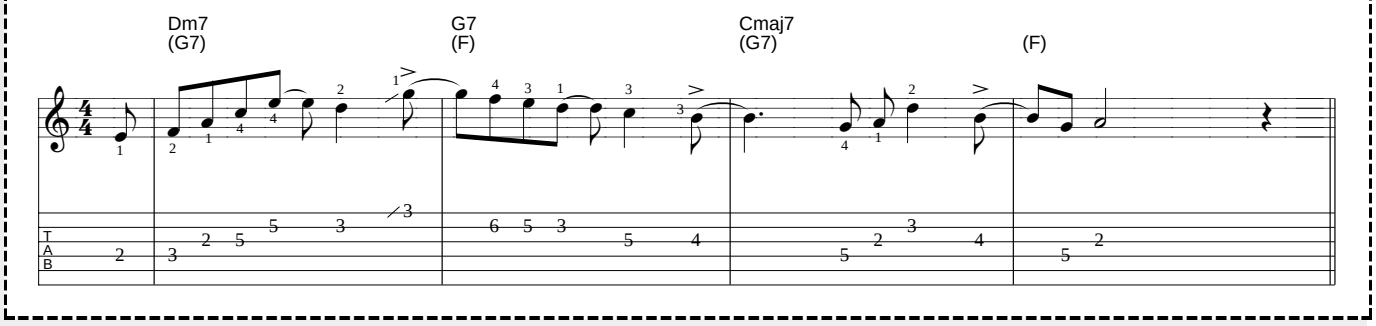


Lick of the Month

TRIBUTE TO SONNY

SEPTEMBER'S LICK CHAMP IS VINCENT DEMASI, OF Levittown, New York. He writes: "This versatile phrase is reminiscent of something tenor saxophonist Sonny Rollins might play. First play across a IIm-V-I cadence in the key of *C (Dm7-G7-Cmaj7)*. Emphasize the notes that fall on the *and* of beat four, anticipating the next measure. Next try the phrase against the chords shown in parentheses. Over *G7* and *F*, the line takes on a *G* dominant sound."

For an earful of great jazz, track down *Sonny Rollins, The Quartets Featuring Jim Hall* on RCA/Bluebird. This disc compiles music from Rollins' classics *The Bridge* and *What's New*, both with Hall.



Send us your candidate for Lick of the Month (preferably notated *and* on cassette), along with a brief explanation of why it's cool and how to play it. If we select your offering, you'll get a funky custom T-shirt that's available *only* to Lick of the Month club members. Mail your entry to Lick of the Month, *Guitar Player*, 411 Borel Ave. #100, San Mateo, CA 94402. Include your name, address, and phone number. Materials won't be returned, and please don't call the office to check the status of your submission. You'll get your shirt if your lick is chosen.

Pentatonic Double-Stops

BY JULIEN KASPER

SOUP UP YOUR PENTATONIC phrases by extracting double-stops—tangy seconds, fourths, and sevenths, as well as sweet thirds, fifths, and sixths. To get a handle on the possibilities, let's dig inside the *C* major/*A* minor pentatonic scale (**Ex. 1**).

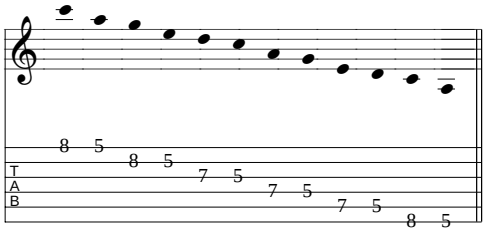
Plucking adjacent notes, as in **Ex. 2a**, yields clangy major seconds and bluesy minor thirds. There are many ways to use these intervals: Add some overdrive to **Ex. 2b**'s major-second grind, and tip your hat to Billy Gibbons. Draped over either *Am* or *C*, **Ex. 2c** is effective in an *A* minor blues. Adding pull-offs makes the line even more fluid. Think Curtis Mayfield as you caress **Ex. 2d**.

Hendrix often moved through the pentatonic scale using fourths and major thirds (**Ex. 3a**). Watch the slides, pulls, and hammers in **Ex. 3b**.

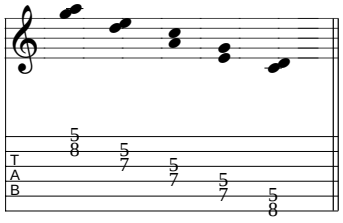
Ex. 4a maps out fifth and minor-sixth shapes within the pentatonic framework. **Ex. 4b** shows how you can slide these airy intervals around

Ex. 1

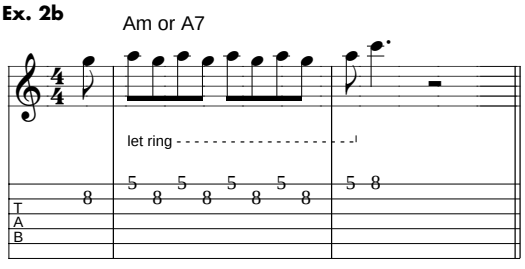
Descending C/A minor pentatonic scale



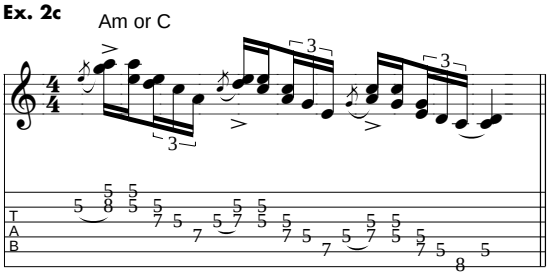
Ex. 2a



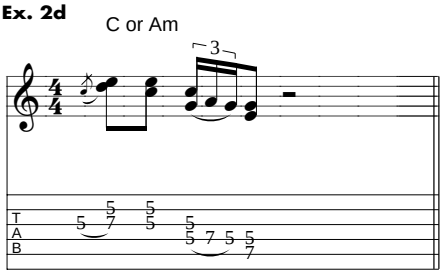
Ex. 2b



Ex. 2c



Ex. 2d



to form a haunting melody. Notice the concluding fifth-to-minor-sixth resolution.

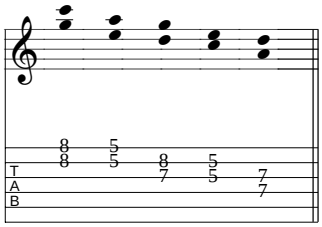
Ex. 4c blends fourth, fifth, and minor-sixth intervals into a lick that recalls Cream-era Clapton or early Jeff Beck. Use a rich, overdriven tone. For even more color, play the sixteenth-note scale passages in bars 1 and 2 as a series of staggered major-second or minor-third intervals. Simply sustain the first note of each pair against the second.

Consisting of major sixths and minor sevenths, **Ex. 5a** introduces double-stops on non-adjacent strings. **Examples 5b** and **5c** convert these big intervals into melodies.

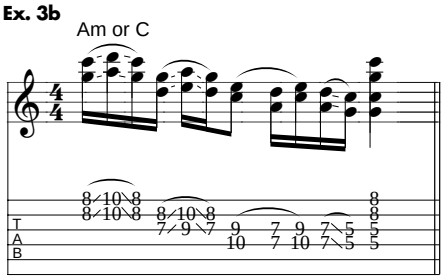
Time to meet major ninths and minor tenths (**Ex. 6a**). **Ex. 6b** shows how these large intervals make a hip alternative to octave soloing.

An Assistant Professor at Berklee College of Music, Julien Kasper teaches Jimi Hendrix and Jeff Beck performance skill labs. While a member of Iko Iko, Kasper opened for Albert Collins, Albert King, and Buddy Guy, and contributed soundtrack music to *Cape Fear*.

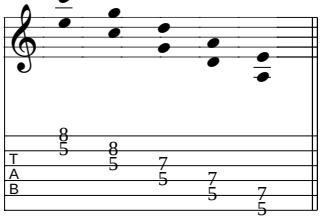
Ex. 3a



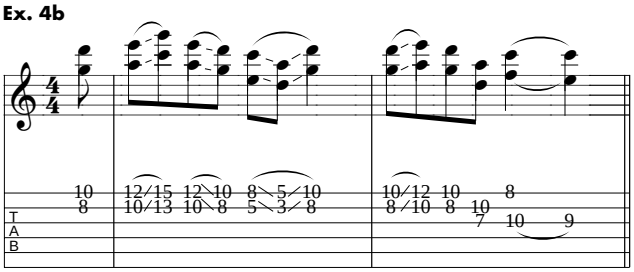
Ex. 3b



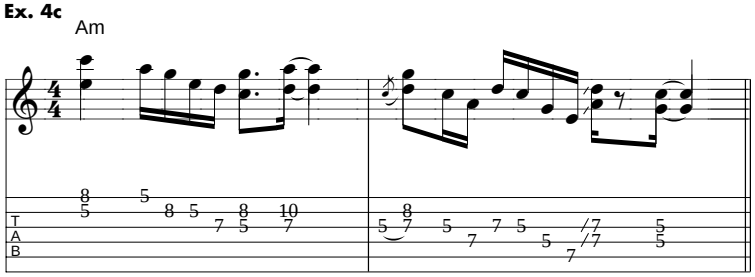
Ex. 4a



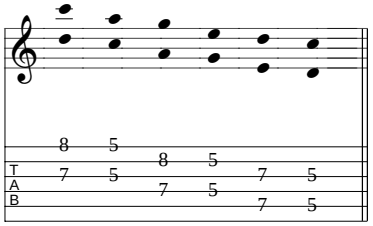
Ex. 4b



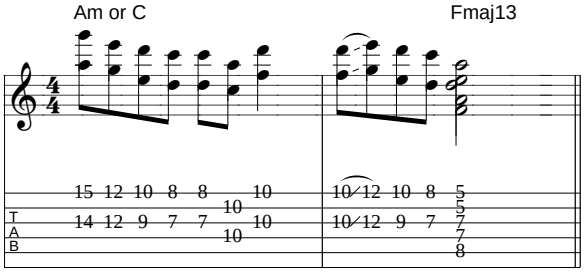
Ex. 4c



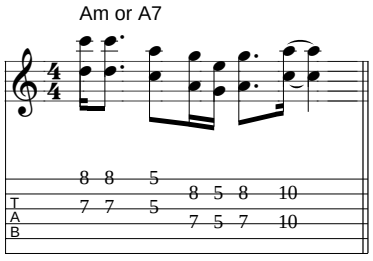
Ex. 5a



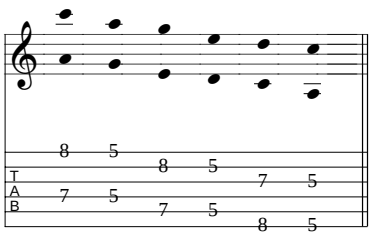
Ex. 5b



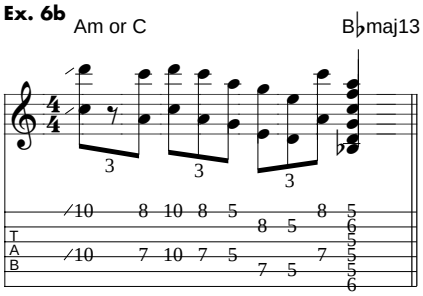
Ex. 5c



Ex. 6a



Ex. 6b



Behind the Slide

BY JEFF McERLAIN

MOST SLIDE GUITARISTS PLAY CHORDS barring with the straight edge of their slides. Slide sorcerer Sonny Landreth, however, has helped pioneer a technique that involves fretting selected notes *behind* his slide as he hits chords. Using this hybrid approach, you can expand your harmonic palette beyond the standard single-position slide chords. All you need is a light touch, reasonably high action, and a little know-how.

The details. Fretting a given string pushes it down, dropping it away from the bottom of the slide. Strum a chord, and this lowered, fretted note will ring out along with the others. This technique works best if you wear your slide on the fourth finger.

Back sliding. Get into an open-*D* tuning (*D, A, D, F♯, A, D*), and then try **Ex. 1a**, a *D* chord barred at the 12th fret with a slide. Now press the third string at the 11th fret and strum all six strings. Presto—a *Dm* chord (**Ex. 1b**). Why? You've lowered the 3 (*F♯*) to the ♭3 (*F♮*).

If you don't hear a difference between the two chords, ease up your slide pressure to allow the fretted string enough room to vibrate below the cylinder. For accurate intonation, keep your slide centered above and perfectly parallel to your chosen fret.

Examples 2a and **2b** are different voicings for a *Dmaj7* (*D, F♯, A, C♯*). In each case, fret with your 2nd finger to lower one of the roots a half-step to *C♯*.

To get a *D7*, simply fret a whole-step below the root with your 1st finger, as in **Examples 3a** and **3b**. This drops *D* to *C♮*, yielding *D, F♯, A, C♮*.

For *Dm7*, fret two notes behind the slide—*F♮* and *C♮* (**Examples 4a** and **4b**). Watch the fingering: 2nd on *F♮* and 1st on *C♮*. Now you're strumming *D, F♮, A,* and *C♮*.

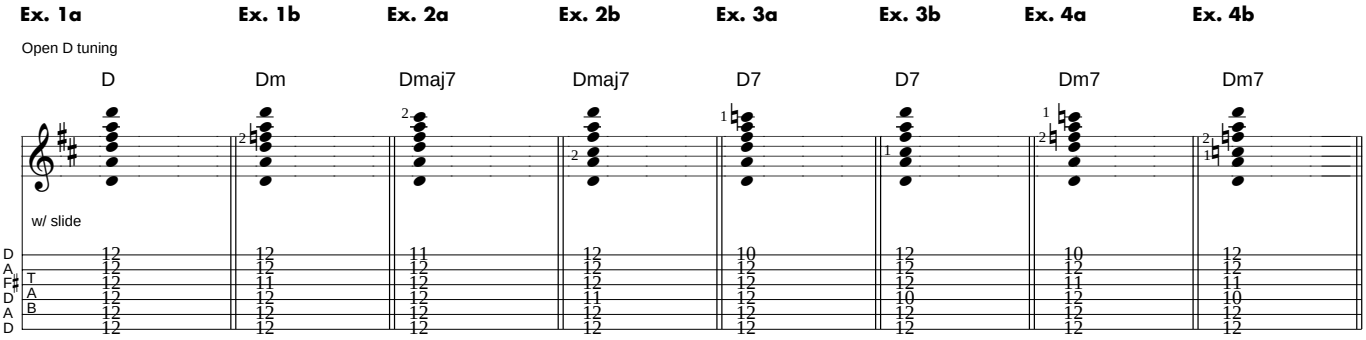
Some final pointers:

• Weave these *Dm, Dm7, D7,* and *Dmaj7* chords into licks and progressions.

• These hybrid voicings are moveable, so plug them in all over the fretboard. Try, say, playing a 12-bar blues using dominant 7s.

• Apply this technique to other tunings, such as open *G—D, G, D, G, B, D*.

A faculty member at National Guitar Workshop and transcriber for Hal Leonard, Jeff McErlain has toured Europe and recorded three disks with Liquid Hips.



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1658 - **The Chromatic Mirror,** BY KEVIN J. LUTKE
1659 - **Lick of the Month:** Tribute to Sonny
1660 - **Behind the Slide,** BY JEFF MCERLAIN
1661 - **Pentatonic Double-Stops,** BY JULIEN KASPER
1662 - ***Classic Jazz Guitar Styles,*** BY TOM DEMPSEY
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ACCESSING NOTES ON CALL

To sample or record any lesson in this month's Sessions, call **1-900-370-0020** and enter the appropriate four-digit code. It costs 75¢ per minute. You'll need a touch-tone phone and parental permission if you're under 18. To better control your phone time, use these touch-tone commands: 7 = forward ten seconds; 8 = rewind ten seconds; 9 = pause ten seconds; # = skip to end; ∗ = repeat lesson.

This month's lessons are also available on CD for only $6.95 (plus $3.95 s/h). For credit card orders call 1-800-222-5544, or send check or money order to Notes On Call, September '98 Lessons, 146 2nd St. N., Ste. 201, St. Petersburg, FL 33701.